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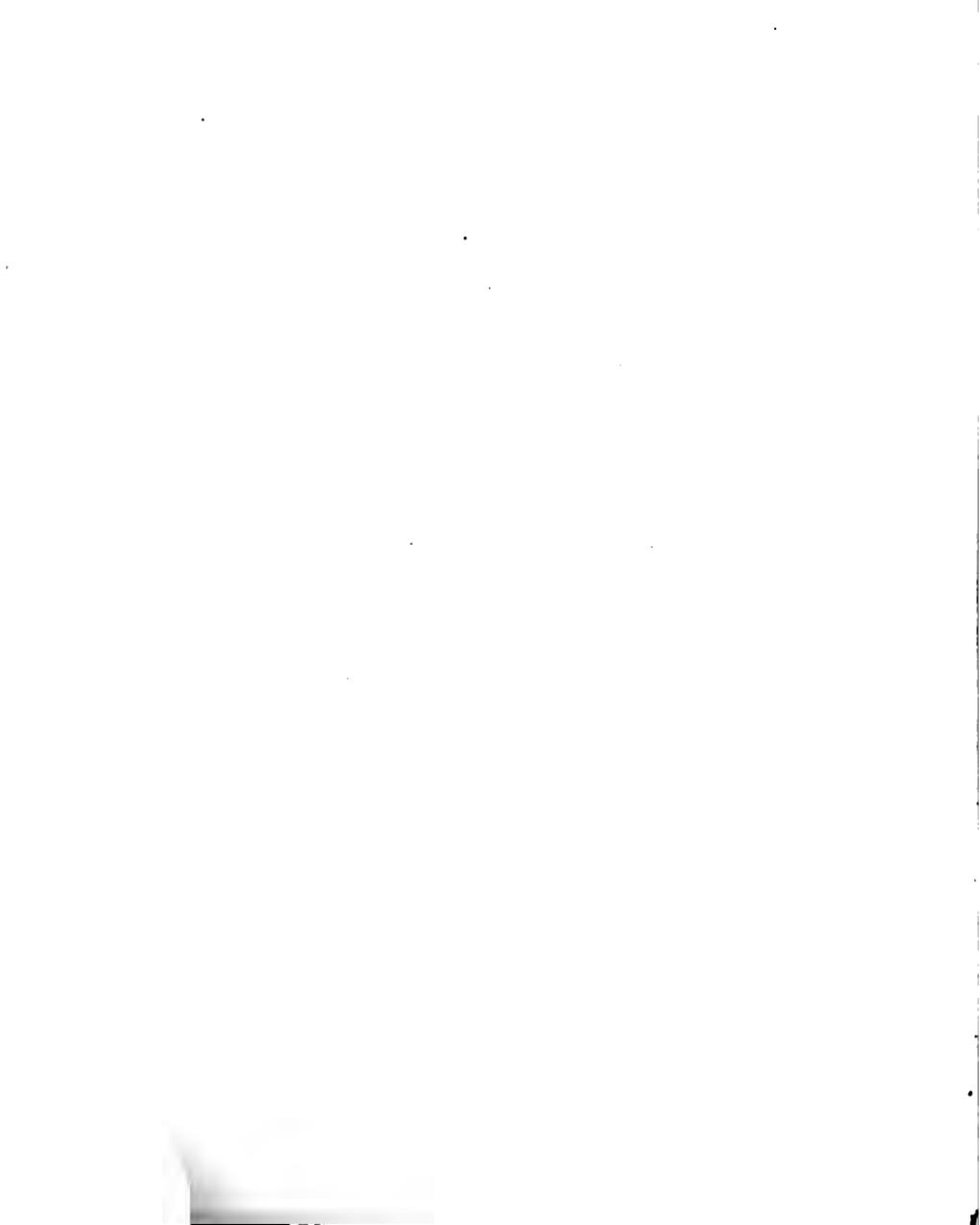


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Song Favours

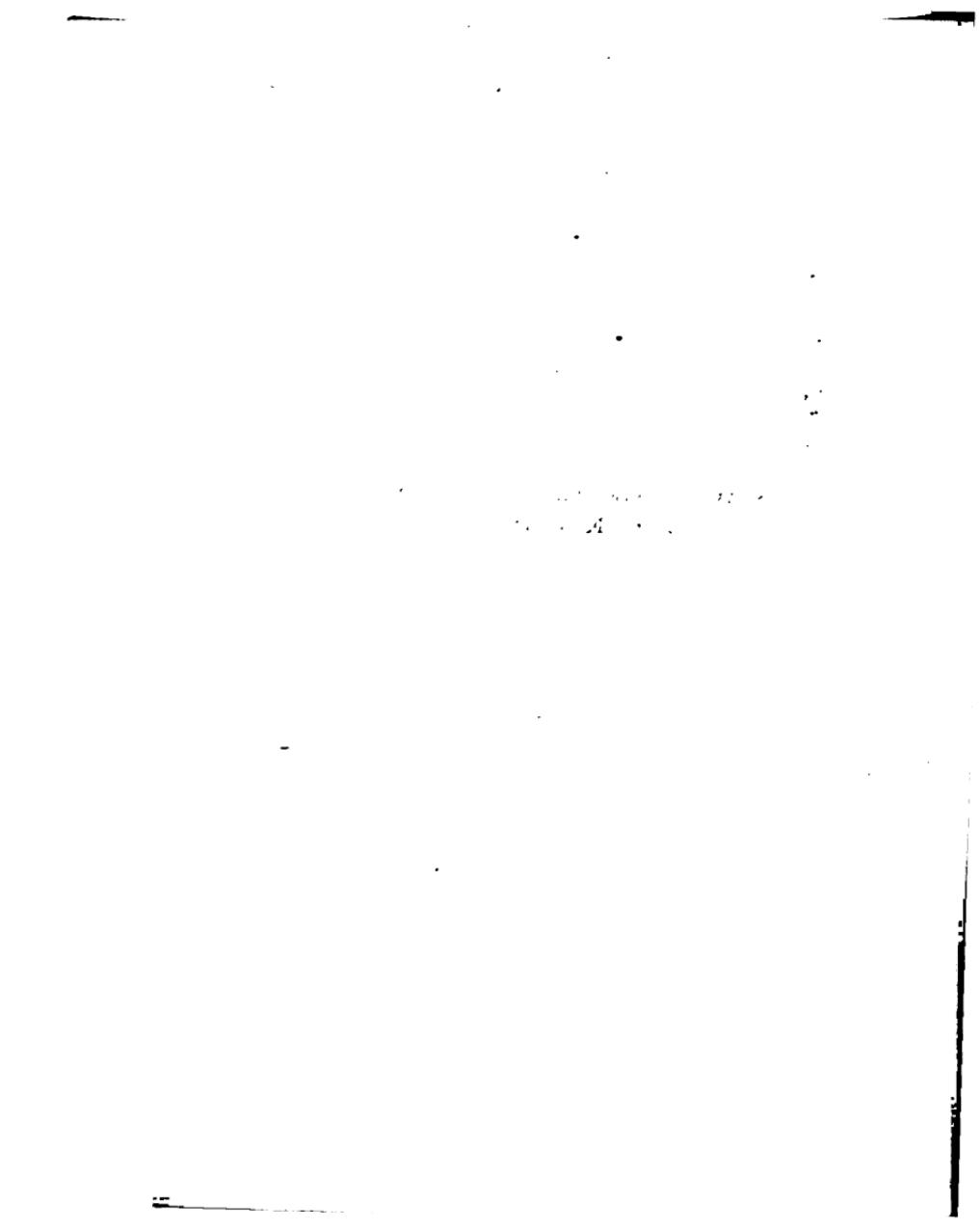
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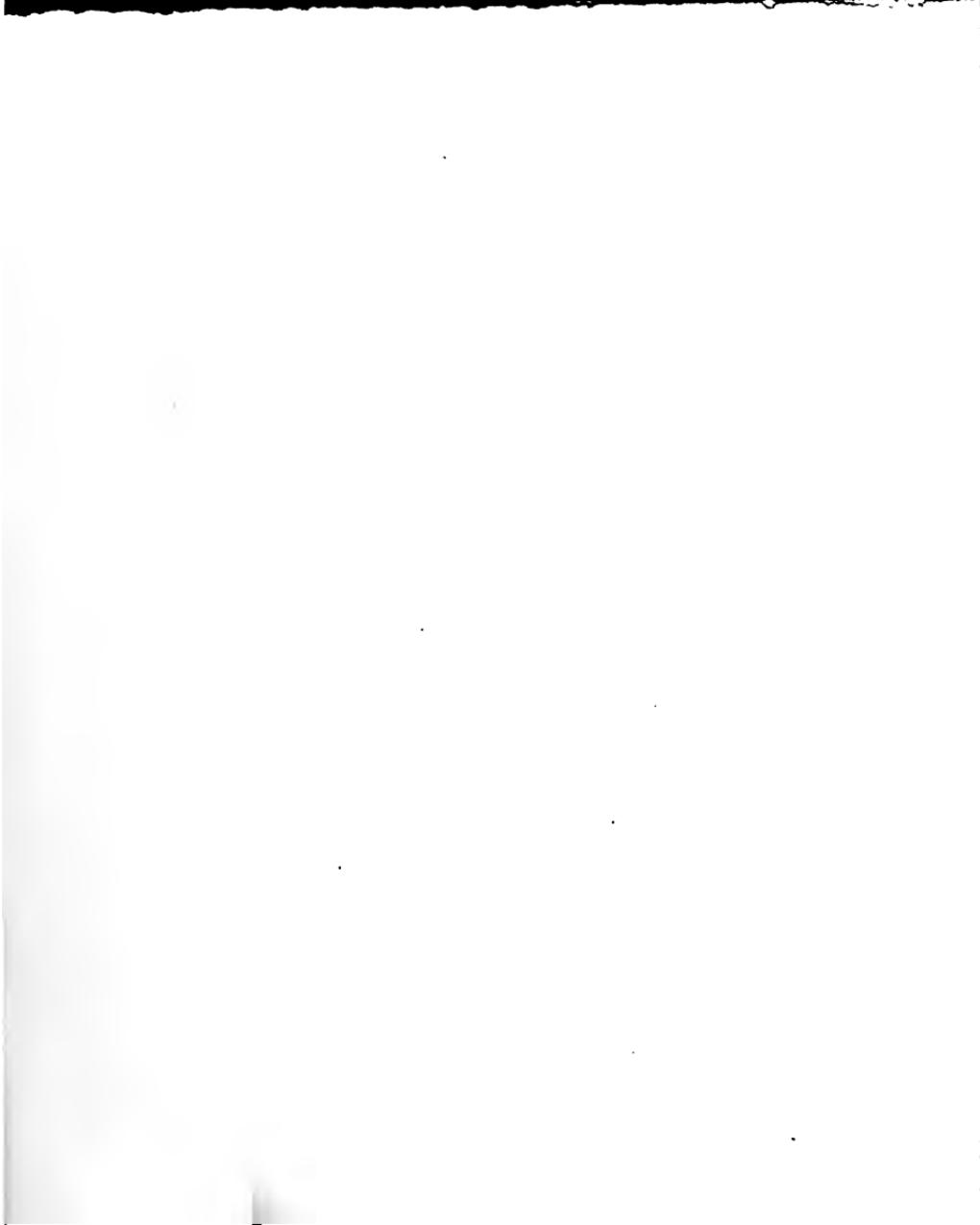
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TO

PERCY AND MABEL DEARMER

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

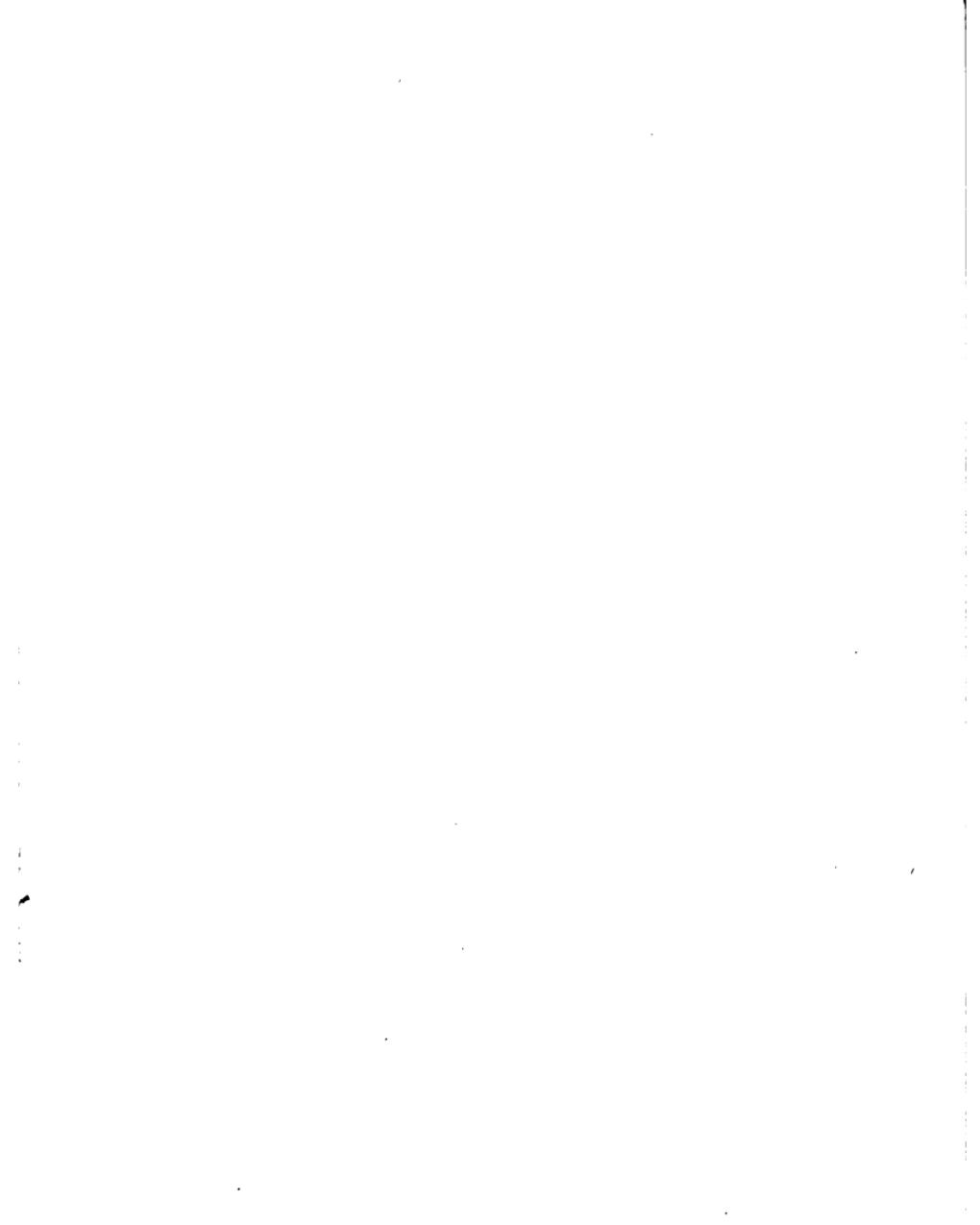




Song Favours

*Bits of ribbon and bits of flower
The Muse lets fall by her bay tree bower
When she hangs her lute on the lily-stalks,
And dances out in the garden walks,
Chasing the winds on her wingèd feet,
And kissing each songbird she chances to meet.*

*Bits of ribbon and bits of flower
The Muse lets fall by her bay tree bower
As she takes her lute from the lily-stalks,
And stands and weeps in the garden walks
When none will love her, or understand,
And the footsteps of Winter are heard in the land.*





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Song Favours

Nimuë

WHEN we had finished at the cider-press,
And rinsed the mill, and laid the bags away,
I went alone into the wilderness
Where ancient writers say
That cunning, false, fair damsel of the lake,
Who fooled the great magician, lingers still,
To work her stolen spells and wicked will
On ev'ry man, and make
All love and passion baneful for her sake.

A white owl darted out across the mere
And hooted to me from a hollow tree ;
Whereby I fancied that I might be near
The haunt of Nimuë,
And climbed an alder-stem, and cried above
The reeds and water, “Sorceress, arise,
And flaunt your loveliness before my eyes ;
But, by the Holy Dove,
I will not yield me to a wanton's love ! ”

The challenge echoed in the holt around
 Till it was broken by a laugh which took
 My breath with wonder at its mocking sound ;
 And when I turned to look
 To find from whence and whom it came, behold,
 There leaned, close by, against a silver birch,
 The very one for whom I came in search,
 Waving a wand of gold
 Twined with an adder, ringed, and aureoled.

No water lilies of a naiad's love,
 Laid lightly on their leaves for her delight,
 Could be more lovely than her breasts above
 The dress of green samite
 Which clung so closely to her supple form ;
 And no magnolia buds, all wet with dew,
 Could shimmer as her white arms when she threw
 Above her head a swarm
 Of angry wasps, to raise a magic storm.

Her face was hidden in a scarlet hood :
 But as the storm arose, which she had made,
 She snatched it off, and left the birch, and stood
 Close at my side, and laid
 Her cheek to mine, and whispered, "Would you
 know

How good it is to win the love, and see
 The unveiled loveliness of Nimuë ;
 And take her hand, and go,
 Her bridegroom, to her palace there below ?

“O, come, and see how beautiful it is ;
 How rich my chamber, and how soft my bed !
 Dear, shall we give and take one little kiss ?
 Old, foolish Merlin said
 My kisses flew into his head like wine.
 Come, only come, you, who would be so wise,
 May learn rare wisdom looking in my eyes ;
 And ecstacies divine
 Will thrill you evermore when you are mine !

“One kiss,” she begged, “take one, and give one
 back !”
 Then, as the fierce wind struck the oaks and firs,
 And made the strongest creak and bend and crack
 About my head, and her’s,
 She clasped her arms around me till my heart
 Half warmed to her ; but when I felt the cold
 Smooth adder on her golden wand unfold
 It’s horrid coils, and start
 Encircling us so that we could not part,

I flung her from me, with a curse above
 The howling of the storm, and cried again,
 "I will not yield me to a wanton's love!"

While through the gusts of rain
 I heard the reptile hiss, and saw her eyes
 Glare like a wild cat's as she bade the swarm
 Of wasps return to her and sink the storm.
 And, therewith, magic wise,
 The earth was still beneath the moonlit skies.

Soon, by the silver birch, I saw her take
 The shining adder from her wand and tie
 It to her wrist, and catch the wasps, and make
 Them close their wings and lie
 Like topaz clusters in her dusky hair ;
 And, lightly throwing off her samite dress,
 Come forth in all her naked loveliness ;
 While I, half in despair,
 Wondered what more, to win me, she would dare.

Till I remembered how the legends tell
 That if the mortal whom she deigns to woo
 Would free himself, and Merlin, from her spell,
 This he must quickly do :—
 Thrust out his hand and whip her wand away,

And snap it thrice and thrice across his knee,
 For that alone can vanquish Nimuë,
 And her enchantments stay,
 And end the thralldom of her devil-play.

So, with the sacred sign made secretly,
 I feigned to seek to kneel to kiss her hand ;
 But she, by reason of her sorcery,
 Was quick to understand
 My sudden tenderness, and took to flight ;
 Her samite train and wasp-filled hair combined
 In one long streamer floating out behind.
 Thus vanished from my sight
 The dotard Merlin's treacherous delight.

The white owl crossed the moon path on the mere,
 And sank into the shadow silently.
 "Transformed, and fallen, with no lover near—
 Ah ! Lady Nimuë,
 I know a bower in a fair pleasance
 Of violets, pinks and narcissuses,
 And hedged with lemon and sweetbriar trees,
 Where one may often chance
 To meet the faithful of the old romance."



Cuckoo Day

THE daybreak glimmers
And shivers and shimmers,
Shivers and shimmers in purple and gold
Where the sun-horses chafe in the sun-god's hold
Just over the Eastern downs ;
Till the flash of their bits and their harness-chains
And the lightnings tied into their tails and manes
Shoots over the Wealden towns,
Shoots on to the Cowfold monast'ry spire,
Shoots out to the sweeps of Chiltington mill,
To Tennyson's windows on Blackdown hill,
And the sky of the neighbouring shire.

Then Aurora, the sun's
Rosy handmaiden, runs
With a basket of fruit blossoms poised on her head,
Green ones and pink ones and white ones and red,
And, with both hands uplifted, out-scatters them wide
Through gardens and orchards on every side,

Such abundance,
 Redundance,
 On every side,
 Of blossoms for apples and damsons and cherries,
 For currants and quinces, pears, plums and straw-
 berries,
 That the labourers call to each other to see
 What a wonderful fruit year 'tis likely to be.

And, lo, it is April, the month of sweets,
 When clouds become whiter than Winter's snow,
 And swallows skim into the village streets
 To seek the old homes of their long ago ;
 And folks declare,
 At Heathfield Fair
 A hook-nosed hag
 From her fairing bag
 Lets the cuckoo fly out, and away !
 Away ! and away ! and away !
 "Cuckoo ! cuckoo !"
 Away and away !
 "Cuckoo !"

The beeches come green
 Where their blushes have been ;
 And the chestnut leaflets begin to rise
 And sprinkle the turf with their brown bud-scales ;

While the speedwell opens its shy, blue eyes,
 To peep at the sun from the garden pales,
 As the love-sick girls of the village pass,
 With their ears alert, through the tender grass,
 A-roaming the meadows and holts until
 The cuckoo shall call over Highden hill,
 For so many times as they hear him call,
 When they hear him first, must the acorns fall,
 Must the Yule log burn, must the lambkins play
 Ere the joy bells will ring on their wedding day.

“Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! cuckoo ! cuckoo !”
 “Four years ?—four years are nearly never !”
 “Cuckoo ! cuckoo !”—“Stop, cuckoo, stop, or we
 shall all be maids for ever !”
 “Cuckoo ! cuckoo !”
 “O, bother you,
 If we must all be maids for ever !”

Wood pigeons coo
 “Grow, peas, do—do !”
 But the wryneck ceases her “peet-pee-peet !”
 As her mate flies over the short, green wheat ;
 And the boys toss their caps, with a cheer,
 When he passes them by with a clear
 “Cuckoo ! cuckoo !”
 And they answer him back with a lusty and clear

“Cuckoo! cuckoo!”

Then haste to the hedgerows to see
What colour the hair may be

Which he

Who secretly runs and searches,
Before the first cuckoo perches,
Will find in his stocking-feet;

A thread,

Black, yellow, or brown, or red,
Blown there from his future sweetheart’s head.

And, once again, the fairies throw aside their ermine
hoods;

And, as we love, we see them in the meadows and
the woods.

And the little children sing,
In a ring o’ roses ring,
“March winds, and April showers
Bring forth the May flowers!”

“Cuckoo! cuckoo!”

Night Shades

WATCH the clouds pass the moon !—
 Come, shall we follow
Their shadows down the hill,
Slacking not speed until
 We reach the hollow ?

Over the springy turf,
 Over the mole heaps,
Over the clumps of furze,
Over the junipers,
 With whoops and droll leaps,

Into the coppice where
 The glow-worms glisten !
There on the ivy trails
We for the nightingales
 Will sit and listen . . .

How very still it is—
I very nearly
Fancy in yonder shade
I hear the Flower Maid
Whisper how dearly

She loveth evermore
Her mortal lover ;
And I can almost see,
Listening cunningly
Where the bats hover,

That evil spirit, who,
Jealous and spiteful,
Carried her far away,
One most unlucky day,
In his arms frightful,

And underneath the hills
Hides her for ever
In such a secret cave
The bravest of the brave
Can find her never :

Only, on Summer nights,
When the moon's shining,
Lovers may chance to hear
Her plaintive murmurs near
Where she is pining—

Ah, that long, mellow note,
Melting with sweetness !
How it thrilled, coming near,
Passing on loud and clear
Into completeness !

Surely to love like ours'
There comes no ending.
May our souls, when we die,
Upward and Heav'nward fly,
Loving and blending !

No? . . . Then in one deep grave
Beg them to place us !
Thus, even in decay,
Whatever finds us may
But as one trace us.

Or, with spice-sprinklings,
And with wine-splashes,
Burn both our bodies up
And in one single cup
Treasure our ashes.

The Secret Shrine

I.

WHEN balsam-buds were bursting sweet,
And willow-wands were fair to see ;
When turtle doves began to coo,
And larks to sing deliciously,

A novice came, at break of day,
Before the Muses' secret shrine,
And bowed in adoration to
The cup filled with Apollo's wine.

The rubies crusted up its stem
Played with the bubbles at its brim ;
And, lo, upon the rising sun
The god of song appeared to him.

II.

When fields were bright with buttercups,
And beanflow'r's scented all the air ;
When nightingales sang day and night,
And cuckoos called from ev'rywhere,

He kissed the crystal plinth whereon
The draught of inspiration stands,
And reached his lips and drank, for none
May take that chalice in their hands,

And through the noontide heat he went
And sang beside the city gate,
Till, even in the market place,
Men's faces grew compassionate.

III.

When dahlias blackened in the frost,
And hollyhocks began to break ;
When swallows fled across the sea,
And wild swan came upon the lake,

He knelt again, at eventide,
Before the sunset gloried shrine,
With leaves of laurel round his head,
And over them the ring divine

Which only those Immortals wear
Who dwell upon Parnassus hill
Now in one heart, one heart alone,
His sweet love-singing lingers still.

Rainbow Gold

ALL those to whom the fields in Spring
Are still the fields of Arcady
Will know the truth of this I sing,
Will know how often one may see
The merry little fairies pass
From flow'r to flow'r across the grass.

Such pretty things there are to see !
But quite the prettiest, I ween,
Is when the tiny Graces three
Undress to bathe in daisy sheen
What time King Oberon goes by
Upon his grand green dragon-fly.

To see them dance as they unloose
Their robes of spider-woven silk,
Quite in their cups with cowslip-juice
And froth of dandelion-milk,
Is just the quaintest, gayest sight
Of Bacchanalian delight.

Now in the old, old Golden Age,
 When ev'rybody saw them so,
 The King wrote on a rose-leaf page,
 Dipping his pen in glow-worm glow
 And glistenings of moonlit dew,
 The secret I now tell to you.

Out North, or South, or East, or West,
 Wherever rainbows touch the ground,
 Great treasure-trove awaits the quest,
 And by true lovers may be found—
 Bright jewelled pots of fairy gold
 A finger's length beneath the mould.

O, happy he who finds those pots,
 For with them he may always buy
 The dimples and the beauty-spots
 Which keep Love pleasing to the eye ;
 And, sweeter far than honey cakes,
 Those kiss-seal'd vows Love never breaks !

There, did you ever, ever hear
 Of such a precious treasure-trove ?
 Run, lov'rs who have cause to fear
 The April fickleness of Love,
 And tie the rainbow to a tree
 And dig below, and you will see !

Elves

WHEN the sun goes to rest
In the cave of the West,
And the stars and the moon
Take his place, very soon
To each wild, lonely glen
Come the wee elfin men.

Tiptoeing, hand in hand,
See them on mole heaps stand,
Crying out, "You shall be
Welcomed right merrily
At the court of our king
If you come to our ring!"

You who scoff, you who fear
Elfin spells, go not near,
For if you even glance
At the place where they dance
Nevermore you may come
Back to your earthly home.

Under a silver birch,
Where wizard ravens perch,
And bands of glow-worms glow
Round and round, row on row,
You will soon find yourself
Turning into an elf.

Then, ere the first lark sings,
You will have tiny wings,
Made of much lighter stuff
Than dandelion fluff,
To waft you far away
From the approaching day.

When the sun goes to rest
In the cave of the West,
To each wild, lonely glen
Come the wee elfin men ;
But all those who have been
Mortals no more are seen.

Fata Morgana

WOMEN sitting in their bowers
Toss me knots of gilly-flowers,
Crying, "Stay with us, to-morrow
You may catch her to your sorrow !"
And the men in taverns drinking
Leave their toasting, and the chinking
Of their glasses, and, with laughter,
Shout, "'Tis a wild goose you're after !"

Some would love me, some would pity,
But I fly far from the city,
Following through wildernesses
My witch with the floating tresses ;
Over roots and stony places,
Over bramble interlaces,
Over moors and deep morasses,
Over rocks and mountain passes !

Then, sometimes a cloud will hide her,
Causing me to weep, and chide her,
Till a sunbeam comes to show me,
Just above or just below me,
Her white arms held to receive me,
Which she does to cheat and grieve me.
O, that God would stop, or teach her
Kindness, so that I might reach her!

An Autumn Elegy

Now it is fitting, and becomes us all
 To think how fast our time of being fades.
 The Year puts down his mead-cup, with a sigh,
 And kneels, deep in the red and yellow glades,
 And tells his beads like one about to die :
 For when the last leaves fall
 He must away unto a bare, cold cell
 In white St. Winter's monastery ; there
 To do hard penance for the joys that were,
 Until the New Year tolls his passing bell.

And 'tis in vain to whisper, " Be of cheer,
 There is a resurrection after death ;
 When Autumn tears will turn to Springtime
 rain,
 As through the earth the Spirit quickeneth
 Toward the old, glad Summer-life again ! "
 He will not smile to hear,
 But only look more sorrowful, and say,
 " How can you mock me if you love me ? No ;
 The day draws very nigh when I must go ;
 The new will be the new ; I pass away."

Yet, kneeling with him, still more sad than he,
I saw him once turn round and smile as sweet
As in the happy rose and lily days,
When, from between the stubble of the wheat,
A skylark soared up through the clouds to praise
The sun's eternity.
Hope seemed to flash a moment in his eyes ;
And, knowing him so well, I know he thought,
"How fair the legend through the ages brought,
That still to live is Death's most sweet surprise !"

Revenge on Cupid

ONCE, as I sniffed a bed of pinks,
Sly Cupid shot a dart,
A tiny thing, with golden barbs,
Which pierced me to the heart.

I vowed revenge, and chased him through
The gate and up the street,
Forgetting he was bless'd with wings
While I had only feet.

I sought him all the day, nor found
Him till the moon arose—
There he was sleeping on the musk
In Mary's garden-close !

I blushed to see the rascal look
So innocent, and weak,
With both his cruel, chubby hands
Beneath his dimpled cheek.

But, straightway, with convolvulus,
Sweet pea, and pilgrims' joy,
I fashioned mighty loops and thongs
And bound the baby boy.

And, knowing what destruction in
His little quiver lay,
I emptied all the arrows out
And threw them all away.

Mermaids

MERMAIDS, born of light and spray,
Pass their merry time away
Singing in the coral caves
To the music of the waves,
Only coming out to love
Dead men sinking from above,
Or to climb the rocks and cry
To the sailors passing by,
Dressing up each other's curls
With anemones and pearls.

Earth-born maids have souls, but these
Lovely daughters of the seas
Have them not, and may not know
Love's ecstatic passion-glow,
May not ever hope to fly
Angel-handed up the sky,
May not even fear to win
Everlasting woe for sin
Till a mortal marries them
With a ring and diadem.

When the marriage rites are o'er,
She, who had no soul before,
And is now a mortal's wife,
Gains eternal spirit-life ;
But if he, her husband, prove
Faithless to his vow of love,
Ere the setting of the sun,
They, who still in soul are one,
With the mermaid's folk will be
At the bottom of the sea.

Camelot

WHEN Spring was running through the woods,
And buds were showing leaf and flower,
We read the *Book of Arthur* in
A coppice facing Holmbush Tower.

And, dreaming o'er the old romance
Together in so sweet a spot,
What wonder if we smiled and said,
“Lo, yonder tow'r is Camelot !”

And scarcely had we spoken when
An old-time pilgrim touched our hands,
To say, “Young men, you linger on
The outskirts of King Arthur's lands.”

“Yes, yes,” we cried, “we know it, but
Which path leads up to Camelot ?”
He, fumbling at his scrip, replied,
“I know it, and I know it not.”

“ O, pilgrim, kindly tell us when
The secret of it we may know ! ”
But, passing underneath the boughs,
He answered, very soft and slow—

“ Some find it when their hair is brown ;
Some find it when their hair is white ;
And you may seek it many years ;
And you may find it out to-night.”

A Love Story

THEY went from beneath the laburnums
Away through the green-eared corn,
With a dear little cupid between them, but lately
born.

The goldfinches sang in the sloe trees ;
The grasshoppers chirped in the drills ;
And the sheep bells all tinkled together along the hills.

And they told to each other their secrets
Close down on the thymy grass
By the chalk pit, where even the shepherds but
rarely pass.

And then, in the sunset, all amber
And roseate, homeward they went
Where the glow-worms shone thick in the mosses,
and grasses bent.

And the full moon arose by the windmill
Plantation of larch trees, and pine,
As they kissed their first kisses of love in the pale
moonshine.

But cupids have wings to their shoulders ;
And love is a delicate flow'r
Which opens, in sunlight or moonlight, to die in
an hour.

An Autumn Allegory

COME, our old mate, come back to us again ;
Too long, too long you linger in the town !
The hazel nuts are slipping in the lane ;
And in the holt the chestnut-burs are brown—
Come, our old mate, both old and young com-
plain !
We tapped a cask of cider yesterday ;
To-morrow we shall thrash the walnut tree.
O, we will feast you, if you come this way,
On pies, and cakes, and cream and frumenty ;
And give you all our shares
Of luscious Harvest plums and William pears.

We never had such apples here before,
And plumper, sweeter filberts never grew ;
And on the grape-vine by the garden door
There still is left a goodly bunch or two—

Come, our old mate, for you is all our store !
For you the medlars soften, one by one,
 And frequently on fresh, clean straw are laid ;
For you the bottled gooseberries are done,
 And currant wine and damson cheese are made :
 We will not think it true
That country sweets are no more sweet to you !

Joyous Gard

I CAME unto the ruined choir
Which, long ago, was Joyous Gard,
And knelt within the holy place
Among the bluebells in the sward.

And, in the glory of the dawn,
When all the birds began to stir,
I saw and heard the requiem
Of him who loved Queen Guenever.

He lay upon a golden bier
Beneath a pall of cloth of silk
Of divers hues, with fringes thick
With loops of pearls as white as milk.

And at his head and at his feet
And by his side tall tapers stood,
Whose little flames made little stars
Against the greenness of the wood.

And many noble knights and dames
Came down from shining Camelot
To pray for mercy on the soul
Of their belov'd Sir Launcelot.

Sloes

GET up, get up,
 You lazy thing !
The sun is high
 Above the Ring,
And stolen fruits
 Have such a charm
When sloes are ripe
 At Barnet's Farm.

The skylarks all
 Are in the sky,
And ev'ry blade
 Of grass is dry,
And we shall not
 Get any harm
From stealing sloes
 At Barnet's Farm.

For even if
The carter sees
Us in the field,
Or in the trees,
He'll never think
To raise alarm,
They are such *slows*
At Barnet's Farm.

The Lost Dart

BETWEEN the sunset and the dusk
Dan Cupid came to me
Out of a border full of musk,
Crying most bitterly.

I took his tear-wet hands in mine,
And smoothed his tangled curls,
So full of glints, and soft and fine
As any baby girl's.

Still he would not be comforted,
And sobbed, "What shall I do—
I've lost the dart my Mother said
I was to shoot at you !"

And, picking up his tiny bow,
He went to seek again ;
But if he finds that dart I vow
That he shall shoot in vain.

Flora

ALAS, for simple pipers who
Seek peace in sylvan places,
When parted hazel-boughs disclose
A nymph with Flora's graces !

I caught the glitter of her rings,
And of her silver buckles,
As she came up the coppice lane
Beneath the honeysuckles.

And when she rested on the bank
I watched the sky above her,
And almost feared one of the gods
Would fly to earth and love her.

At sunset, when the flow'rs that sleep
Were shutting, she departed ;
Which left me, till my comrade came,
A little heavy-hearted.

To His Conscience

(FOR A PICTURE BY J. P. DONNE.)

Away, and die !
Nor deem that I
Shall ever miss
Your holy kiss.

O, you will find
Death not unkind ;
But true to keep
You fast asleep.

My heart will ache ?—
These lilies make
Me very faint
With your complaint.

Away, and die !
Nor deem that I
Shall ever miss
Your holy kiss.

Lilian

LILIES very white and sweet
Cover her from head to feet
Underneath the linen sheet.

And such beauty fills the place
When I lift the square of lace
From her little marble face !

For a baby's soul, they say,
Very seldom flies away
From it's empty shell of clay

Till the service of the dead
In the graveyard has been said,
And the corse is buriëd.

Then it is that I shall weep,
When I can no longer peep
At my darling fast asleep.

Pan Eating Honey

PAN is sitting in the grass
By the Golden Gate,
Eating honey from the comb—
O, to be his mate!

Now he stops to pipe a tune ;
Now to sing a ditty ;
Now to look and smile at me
Out of love and pity.

The Flight of the White Bird

RODEN NOEL, MAY 26, 1894.

THE golden bowl lies broken on the floor.
The silver cord is loos'd: earthbound no more,
Our White Bird flies out seaward from the shore.

Know you the Blessed Island, fisherman ?
Its cliffs are hung with harps Æolian.
Our White Bird seeks it at the call of Pan.

The silver cord is loos'd—if daylight fail ?
Our White Bird needs no guiding mast or sail ;
He knows the secret of the nightingale.

His sad mates settle round the temple door
To coo among the lilies on the floor.
Our White Bird flies out seaward from the shore.

Danae

Up to her chamber lattice
The yellow roses grew,
And always through their fragrance
Came that sweet voice she knew.

She leaned to smell, to kiss them ;
The wind blew back her vest,
And so the golden petals
Were showered on her breast.

Adam and Lilith

I HAVE kissed, for her sake,
Fang and lip of the snake.

But I loathed as I kissed ;
And the fiend backed, and hissed.

Now I hide in the grove ;
And I curse all my love !

Cupid Rejected

GET out, you saucy boy,
Why should I try you ?
Why should I be your toy ?
Why not defy you ?

Pick up your darts, and go ;
Nor call to-morrow !
Your heart is full, I know,
Of doubt and sorrow.

Now don't begin to cry—
You'll change me never,
Not even if you sigh
And sob for ever.

At the Sign of the Rose

CURSED is he who doth disclose
The converse held beneath the rose !

When friend meets friend, salute the sign,
And toast it well in ale or wine.

The world may seek to pry within ;
May swear you do a secret sin ;

But shun them for their taunts and jeers,
And hate them for their itching ears !

Believe me, it is Heaven to blend
In faith with a familiar friend.

Narcissus

Poor Echo would untie her hair and let
It blow about him ; and would sigh, and take
His hands and fondle them ; and even make
The tears come to her eyes, to press her wet
Cheeks to his breast : all this, and more, and yet
It never moved him ; daily o'er the lake
He leaned, and loved, and languished for the sake
Of that fair face deep in the water set.

And when the hounds of Spring arose, and ran
Through all the golden fields of daffodils,
Behind the shining chariot of the sun,
He whispered, "*Kiss me, kiss me!*" and began
To bend down lower, with soft pants and thrills,
Till, presently, the sweet, cold kiss was won.

The Pond's Secret

I HEARD a water lily say,
“Beneath my leaves, between my roots
A child of Love is hid away.”

The Sussex Muse

BRING out the mead, and talk no more of love,
What time the red sun sinks by Highden hill ;
And let me lie beneath the medlar trees,
With Marston's Book of Garden Secrets, till
The glow-worms shine about my feet and knees ;
And, on a bough above,
A dreamy nightingale sings all his long,
Sweet passion music ; and up in the loo
Hill-side plantation doves and pigeons coo ;
And I perceive the ecstacy of song.

For where the damask roses, mignonette,
Stocks, tiger-lilies, musk and mint diffuse
Their night-fresh fragrance, and the moonlight
makes
Their colours mystical, the Sussex Muse,
Wrapt in a veil of mist, alights, and takes
Her Pan-pipes, jewel set,

Out from between her breasts, and, for myself
 Alone, against the sun dial leans and plays
 The very tunes she played in bygone days
 To Fletcher, Otway, Collins, Shelley, Realf.

I watch one little star which twinkles through
 The medlar-leaves ; and in the marrow-vine
 Hear beetles hum ; and from the barn afar
 Black fitter-mice fly round her head, and mine,
 As if they would discover who we are,
 That, heedless of the dew,
 Linger so long and late into the night,
 When soon from all the sheep tracks on the
 downs
 The merry elves will trundle shepherds' crowns,
 And make the meadows ring with their delight.

And to St. Mary's tow'r at Washington
 Five villagers go past to practise chimes ;
 And Farmer Bowley round his orchard goes
 To burn and dig out wasp and hornet himes ;
 And courting couples kiss, when they suppose
 None of their mates look on ;
 And Shepherd Marner, at the grindstone near,
 Sharps up his shears. Then, slowly, unto me,
 Who may not more than breathe lest she
 should flee,
 The Muse comes close, and whispers in my ear :—

“ You who have stood on Chanctonbury Ring
 So many times at sunrise, calling me
 Out from the northern pastures of the Weald,
 Or southward from the slopes toward the sea,
 Not vainly unto me have you appealed,
 But I would have you sing,
 Before I love you, something soft and clear
 And full of countryside simplicity ;
 As Barnes sang in his Dorset Rectory,
 And Gale sings now in leafy Warwickshire.

“ My dainty Fletcher joined the courtier throng
 Of that most vain of queens, Elizabeth ;
 Forgetting Sussex in their company.
 And Otway with base aliens starved to death.
 While gentle Collins only came to me
 When madness filled his song
 With wild discordance. Thus, for ever, I
 Have kept no native music but the strains
 Of horse-bells jingling up and down my lanes,
 Of singing birds, and streams which gurgle by.

“ When Shelley’s soul was carried through the air
 Toward the manor house where he was born,
 I danced along the avenue at Denne,
 And praised the grace of Heaven, and the morn
 Which numbered with the sons of Sussex men
 A genius so rare !



So high an honour and so dear a birth,
That, though the Horsham folk may little care
To laud the favour of his birthplace there,
My name is bless'd for it throughout the earth.

“ I taught the child to love, and dream and sing
Of witch, hobgoblin, folk and flower lore ;
And often led him by the hand away
Into St. Leonard’s Forest, where of yore
The hermit fought the dragon—to this day,
The children, ev’ry Spring,
Find lilies of the valley blowing where
The fights took place. Alas ! they quickly
drove
My darling from my bosom and my love,
And snatched my crown of laurel from his hair.

“ Realf I loved too, and fondly hoped that he
Would sing for me alone, and in my name
Please all the world, but very soon he left
My arms to go and seek another fame ;
Leaving me of my latest bard bereft.
Still, he is dear to me.
And I was proud, when, in America,
He struck for liberty with old John Brown,
Fighting beside him when he took the town
Of Harper’s Ferry, in Virginia.

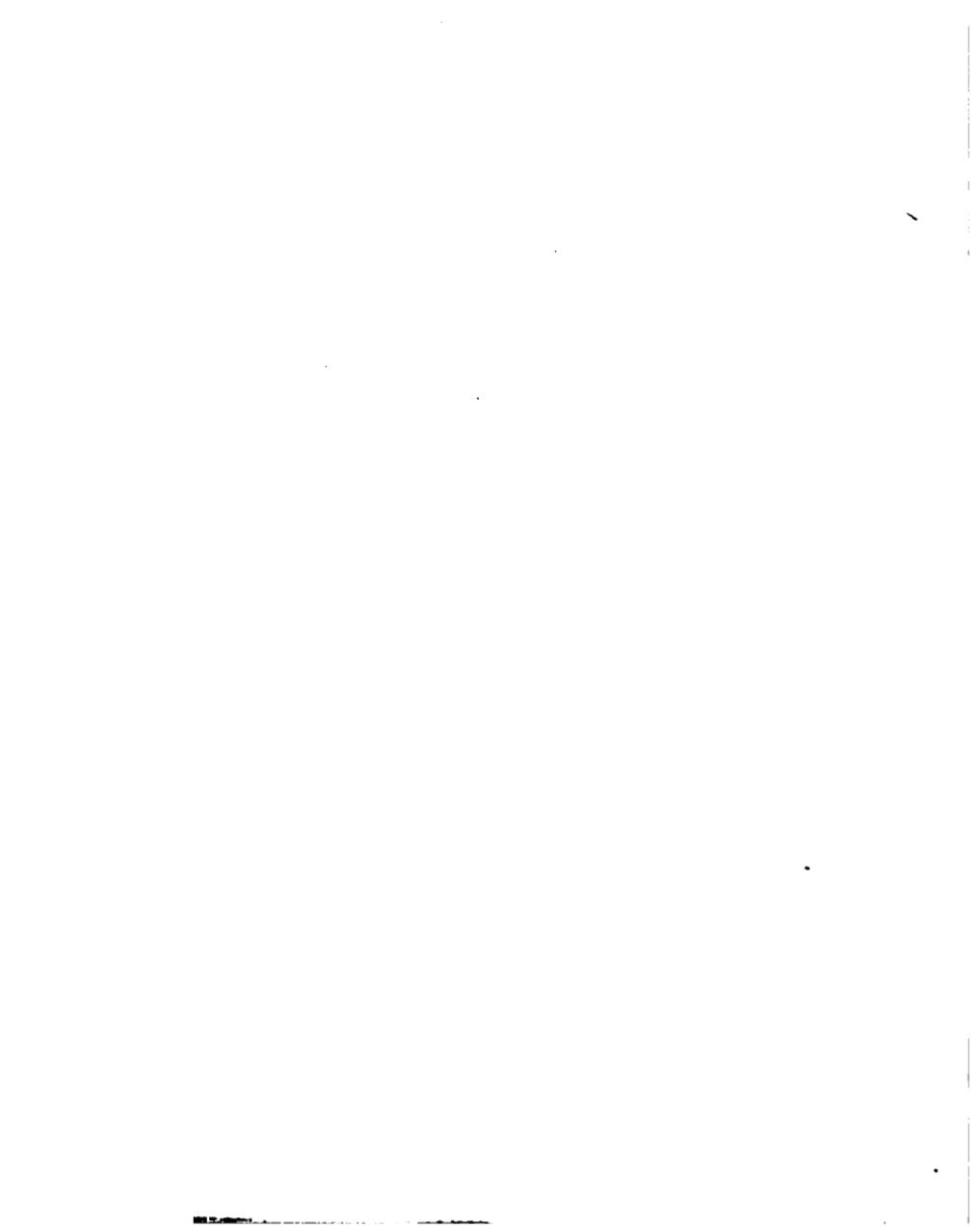
“Can I not charm enough to make one choose
 For the life-mistress of his poesy,
 Instead of those who come from Hindustan
 With lotus-flowers, or from Italy
 With myrtle, or with plum-blooms from Japan,
 The simple Sussex Muse ?

O, I would love him in his hours of dream,
 Hid in the brakes at Parham, or upon
 The heathy common-lands of Chiltington,
 Or by some Pulbro’, Arun-filling stream !

“And when King Oberon makes merry round
 The park at Wiston on a gala night
 With Queen Titania and all her train,
 Then I would give him sev’nfold fairy-sight ;
 And he should see me step from Charles’ Wain
 On to the smooth, green ground,
 To join the fairy court festivities.
 And he should go with me, and see and hear
 Strange sights and sounds among the sleeping
 deer
 Beneath the ancient oak and hawthorn trees.”

Here the wind rustling all the medlar-leaves
 Drowns her soft voice. I reach my lips in vain
 To kiss her jewelled Pan-pipes, or her veil,
 For jasmine-petals fall as fast as rain—

Shook from a full-blown spray swung from its
nail
Beneath the cottage eaves—
Concealing her. Up in the churchyard yews
The parson's owls begin to hoot. I cry,
“Return, return, O, lovely one, and I
Will never worship any other Muse !”



Drinking Songs

*“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,
And wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.
Let him drink, and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more.”*

PROVERBS OF KING SOLOMON

Cider Apples

SOME choose to worship in the church ;
Some choose to worship in the chapels ;
But we will worship by ourselves
In orchards full of cider apples.

Who sends their blossom in the Spring ?
Who sets it in the Summer weather ?
Who ripens them at Autumn time ?
'Tis Him we'll worship all together !

And they may mock us in the church ;
And they may jeer us in the chapels ;
But we will listen unto Him
Who loads the trees with cider apples.

The Forlorn Lover

I MET a merry maiden,
As blithe as blithe could be.
I found a young man weeping,
Most pitiful to see.
He sobbed, "O, she is gone, is gone!"
He sobbed, "O, she is gone!"

I took his hand most gently
And led him to the inn,
And called, "Two pots of cider,
The three-year-old from Lynn!"
He murmured, "I shall die, shall die!"
He murmured, "I shall die!"

I bade him, "Now forget her,
And drown your misery;"
And when his pot was emptied
His face was good to see.
He shouted, "I shall live, shall live!"
He shouted, "I shall live!"

Parson Herrick's Muse

THE parson dubs us, in our cups,
“A tipsy, good-for-nothing crew !”
It matters not—it may be false—
It matters not—it may be true.
But here's to parson Herrick's Muse !
Drink to it, dear old comrades, please !
And, prithee, for my tombstone choose
A verse from his Hesperides.

The parson's rich, but we are poor ;
And we are wrong, but he is right—
Who knows how much his cellar holds,
Or how he goes to bed at night ?
But here's to parson Herrick's Muse !
Drink to it, dear old comrades, please !
And, prithee, for my tombstone choose
A verse from his Hesperides.

The landlord shall our parson be ;
The tavern door our churchyard gate ;
And we will fill the landlord's till
Before we fill the parson's plate !
But here's to parson Herrick's Muse !
Drink to it, dear old comrades, please !
And, prithee, for my tombstone choose
A verse from his Hesperides.

When Fortune's Wheel Clogs

Ho ! ho ! shall we sink
Because we despair ?
No ! no ! let us drink,
Laugh, sing, and not care
For anything when
Dame Fortune's wheel clogs—
And the more we know men
The more we love dogs !

Bring cider, my lass,
And glorious mead ;
In pewter or glass,
But bring it with speed !
It's drinking time when
Dame Fortune's wheel clogs—
And the more we know men
The more we love dogs !

O, apple-juice joys !
O, honey and flow'rs !
Drink, drink, drink, my boys,
 The kingdom is ours !
What a joke it is when
 Dame Fortune's wheel clogs—
And the more we know men
 The more we love dogs !

Rum and Milk

Now some may drink to ladies fine,
With painted cheeks and gowns of silk ;
But we will drink to dairymaids,
In pocket-mugs of rum and milk !
O, 'tis up in the morning early,
When the dew is on the grass,
And St. John's bell rings for matins,
And St. Mary's rings for mass !

The merry skylarks soar and sing,
And seem to Heaven very near—
Who knows what blessed inns they see,
What holy drinking songs they hear ?
O, 'tis up in the morning early,
When the dew is on the grass,
And St. John's bell rings for matins,
And St. Mary's rings for mass !

The mushrooms may be priceless pearls
A queen has lost beside the stream,
But rum is melted rubies when
It turns the milk to golden cream !
O, 'tis up in the morning early,
When the dew is on the grass,
And St. John's bell rings for matins,
And St. Mary's rings for mass !

“Pass the Pewter!”

Ho ! pass the pewter, Teddy !
Hi ! pass the pewter, Jack !
And we will be as merry
As good monks drinking sack.
This is no time for thinking
If mates or girls are true,
But just the time for drinking
And helping out the brew.

Now froth it, froth it, Teddy !
And hold it gently, Jack !
May all our troubles leave us
And all our joys come back !
This is no time for thinking
If mates or girls are true,
But just the time for drinking
And helping out the brew.

Here's to the malthouse, Teddy !
Here's to the hop-pole, Jack !
Malthouses, stand for ever !
And, hop-poles, never crack !
This is no time for thinking
If mates or girls are true,
But just the time for drinking
And helping out the brew.

Barum Ware and Devonshire Cider

ALL earthenware is dust and clay,
And dust and clay is ev'ry man ;
And if you can't be easy, well,
Just be as easy as you can.
O, some have thin Venetian glass
From which to drink their foreign cheer,
But give us cups of Barum ware
And cider made in Devonshire !

Do something, if you can, I pray ;
I pray you, something, good or bad.
Be merry while it is to-day,
To-morrow we may all be sad.
O, some have thin Venetian glass
From which to drink their foreign cheer,
But give us cups of Barum ware
And cider made in Devonshire !

Preserve us from cross women's tongues,
From coppers, duns, and all disgrace ;
And when one cask is empty, may
A full one always take it's place !
O, some have thin Venetian glass
From which to drink their foreign cheer,
But give us cups of Barum ware
And cider made in Devonshire !



The Arbour

O, THE tap-room in the Winter
When the ground is white with snow,
But the arbour in the Summer
When the honeysuckles blow !
So, landlord, ice the cider,
And put rose-leaves in the beer ;
And we'll drink with any fellow
Who will pay his footing here !

O, a nightingale is singing
In the lilac on the lawn,
And we'll join him in his chorus
Till the day begins to dawn !
So, landlord, ice the cider,
And put rose-leaves in the beer ;
And we'll drink with any fellow
Who will pay his footing here !

O, the moon lights up the lilies
Through the blossoms on the lime;
But the rising sun is better
For a clock for closing time!
So, landlord, ice the cider,
And put rose-leaves in the beer;
And we'll drink with any fellow
Who will pay his footing here!

“Poor Old Charley”

WHEN he who loves to sing a song
Is heard no more among his brothers ;
And they have carried him to church
And left him sleeping with the others ;
O, if you make a wreath for him,
Make it of bay-leaves, hops, and barley ;
And, now and then, pour out a drink
And pass it round for “poor old Charley !”

Sometimes he may wake up again
And join you at the tap-room table ;
Or watch you from the manger when
The landlord pops you in the stable.
O, if you make a wreath for him,
Make it of bay-leaves, hops, and barley ;
And, now and then, pour out a drink
And pass it round for “poor old Charley !”

And when you roll home late at night
 Fear not if you should see him near you;
He will your guiding angel be,
 And to your very bedside steer you!
O, if you make a wreath for him,
 Make it of bay-leaves, hops, and barley;
And, now and then, pour out a drink
 And pass it round for "poor old Charley!"

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